



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 21, 2006

SR# 022106-36

Mechanics play indirect role in making a patrol a success

by Sgt. Zach Mott
3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team,
4th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office

BALAD, Iraq (Feb. 9, 2006) -- Broken vehicles can't complete a mission. The reason a vehicle is broken is secondary to the mechanics of Bulldog Troop, 2nd Squadron, 9th Cavalry. To them, ensuring a vehicle is mission capable is the priority.

"I'm really proud of these guys," said Staff Sgt. Edward Vanover, maintenance team chief for Bulldog Troop. "I haven't had a vehicle down for more that 24 hours -- out of 87 vehicles that's pretty good."

Vanover and his team of 10 mechanics ensure that everything from HUMVEEs to Bradleys to generators and everything in between meets all the needed operating specifications.

"If it's not (meeting specifications) then I assign the mechanics to each job to ensure that that vehicle gets up and running and ready for a combat patrol," he said.

The rigorous mission of Bulldog Troop, 2nd Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers takes the vehicles across beaten roads, rough terrain and just about everywhere else. But, it's the mechanics who ensure those vehicles are able to meet these challenges.

"These vehicles they take a beating," Vanover said. "There's natural wear-and-tear, operator error, things like that. We've got to get it back up and ready for the next patrol."

With so many vehicles in his charge, Vanover said he relies on the experience of combat-tour mechanics to know what to have on-hand.

"They gave me the insight as to what were a lot of the issues last time, as far as this always broke on vehicles or this didn't work and this did," he said. "We took all that perspective and tried to order and stock up on a lot of things that were a problem in the past."

When it comes time to plan a mission -- whether it's a raid on a village or a routine route clearance mission -- leaders need to know they can count on the vehicles to make the trip.

"They're an integral part, they're not just support," said 1st Lt. Ronald Magtanong, executive officer for Bulldog Troop. "We view it as a combat operation in-and-of-itself because without them these guys (the scouts) can't go out on the road and do combat patrols.

In the few months the troop has been in Iraq, Vanover said his team takes advice from the patrols and uses their mechanic skills to help the patrols become more effective.

"We do a lot of fabricating," he said. "Patrols come in and say, 'hey, this vehicle is working, this equipment is working, but it could work a lot better if ...' For instance we've taken a tracked vehicle's spotlights and hooked them up to the HUMVEEs, fabricated them and wired them in."

Vanover is quick to point out the credit for keeping the troop up and running goes to his team of mechanics.

"Give a lot of credit to these guys, I just sit back and direct, these guys make it happen," he said.



Staff Sgt. Jeremiah Johnson, shop foreman, Bulldog Troop, 2nd Squadron, 9th Cavalry, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Task Force Band of Brothers, repairs part of the engine of a Humvee prior to the vehicle leaving Logistical Support Area Anaconda. Johnson and the other mechanics of Bulldog Troop are responsible for more than 80 vehicles.

(Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Public Affairs Office, Feb. 9, 2006)